Auction of seized timber

4385. SHRI INDRAMONI BORA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Honourable Supreme Court has permitted *vide* order dated 15-1-1998, disposal of "illegally felled seized timber" duly inventorised and cleared by HPC by auction sale;

(b) whether it is also a fact that HPC cleared saw mills were taken on hire by Forest Department of Arunachal Pradesh to process that auctioned timber under supervision of Forest Department; and

(c) if so, who were responsible for dispatches and measurements of such processed timbers and what was the rule and procedure for dispatches of that timbers out side North East?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV) : (a) As per Hon'ble Supreme Court's order dated 15-1-1998, out of the illegal timber confiscated , logs suitable for manufacture of veneer and plywood were to be processed by the State Forest Department within their own factories or by hiring such facilities. The remaining timber was to be first offered for sale to the Forest Department for bonafide official use and the balance one was allowed to be sold in public auction or through sealed tenders.

(b) Yes, Sir. However, Hon'ble Supreme Court's order dated 15-1-1998 did not provide for sawing of auctioned timber by the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department in the High Power Committee cleared saw mills.

(c) As per Hon'ble Supreme Court's order dated 15-1-1998, transportation of auctioned timber (as well as legal timber) including sawn timber outside the North-Eastern region had to be done through Railway under the strict supervision of the Forest Department.

Timber wagons

4386. SHRI INDRAMONI BORA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that all the timber wagons detained by Ministry during 1999-2000 were loaded with prior permission and under supervision of Forest Officers of Assam as per orders of Honourable Supreme Court dated, 15-1-98;

(b) if so, why the physical verifications of all the detained wagons was done without informing the consignors to whom permission was granted; and

(c) whether any rule or guideline was prescribed for revalidation of Transit passes and imposition of Hammer marks by the Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV) : (a) As per Hon'ble Supreme Court's order dated 15-1-1998, transportation of auctioned timber (as well as legal timber) including sawn timber outside the North-Eastern Region was done only through Railway Wagons under the strict supervision of the Forest Department.

(b) Based on the information gathered the physical verifications of about 200 wagons loaded with timber were carried out. In the physical verification and subsequent investigation these wagons were found to be carrying illegal timber and timber without requisite hammer mark. These wagons were being transported on invalid/fake/altered transit passes. After issuing of Show Cause Notice to the consignor and personal hearing, decisions in respect of these wagons have been taken.

(c) In exercise of powers vested with the Ministry of Environment and Forests as per Hon'ble Supreme Court's order dated 13-1-2000, detailed guidelines to regulate the movement of timber from North-Eastern States have been issued by the Ministry and the special Investigating Team from time to time.

Bamboo for traditional users

4387. SHRI S. M. LAL JAN BASHA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) to what extent Government have interacted with State Governments to ensure that there is a proper supply of bamboo to traditional bamboo users;

(b) details of such specific interactions with State Governments on requests of NGOs and others;

(c) the outcome of such talks and discussions;

(d) whether it is a fact that Government have lost interest in such matters; and